

capital, without a rival, of the Norman kingdom.

His youth had been spent mainly in that city, and there alone he could shroud himself in the semi-Byzantine, semi-Moslem life which was made a reproach to him. Sicily was at all times a safe retreat from which to watch the events of the mainland and prepare for further action. Besides this, his natural preference was for Palermo with its groves of orange and almond filling the beautiful valley of Conca d'Oro, and the cool winds blowing from Monte Pellegrino. From 1130 on, and through most strenuous years, he almost invariably returns to Palermo for the winter; only in 1137 and 1138 does he to have remained on the mainland; after he had emerged triumphantly from his danger he more and more time in his native island; from 1144 to 1149 he is mainly at Palermo, and from the summer of 1150 he returns* no more to Italy,

It was natural that Palermo and its neighbourhood should show traces of his piety and magnificence. Of all the churches which he founded his favourite was the cathedral of Palermo. The foundation of this was laid in 1131* thanksgiving after escape from shipwreck in the bay. The

King confided to tht* keeping of UMJ
bfohop the
marble sarcophagus In which htt
wltifwl to be
buried¹; his throne is still to by *m*
the church,

^ * "Sweophagoi vert? thu*a ixMrphyrilUm n«!
t|«*i»mg «id
signtim pwpetatjin rrmr»|>i0u«t in
perrnaniuroi," *Bm t)anirl«*, / *rtgati*
tffttikri,»/». **m,, p, s**